

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGE GRANT RECIPIENT FOR 1996: MARKETING THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES IN THE RAPPAHANNOCK RIVER WATERSHED

Grant Recipient: Friends of the Rappahannock (FOR)
Grant Title: Marketing the Economic Benefits of Sustainable Development
Practices in the Rappahannock River Watershed
EPA Project Manager: Mindy Lemoine - lemoine.mindy@epa.gov
Organization Contact: John P. Tippet, Executive Director
Friends of the Rappahannock
P.O. Box 7254
Fredericksburg, VA 22404
(540) 373-3448
<http://www.crri.org/for>
Email: cleanriver@pobox.com
Project Period: 4/11/97 - 4/30/99
Affected Areas: Rappahannock River Watershed (Virginia)

INTRODUCTION AND PROJECT RATIONALE

The Rappahannock River watershed has experienced the fastest population growth rate in Virginia. With this growth has come an increase in the development market and rapid land use change, greatly affecting the watershed's health. The challenge of this project was thus to maintain environmental quality while fostering appropriate economic growth.

The project's goal was to promote community partnerships which encourage and equip land developers in using environmentally sustainable practices throughout the watershed. The economic benefits of green development were taught and promoted among developers - addressing soil, water, air, and energy-related conservation practices.

The project focused on creating a base upon which future collaborations on reduced-impact development practices could take place. It provided for the initial investment in education and community partnership building, and has resulted in the creation of strong partnerships around the area, pulling both environmental and development interests together to achieve higher development standards. Its success is evident in the now-completed project's continuation as a key part of community advocacy.

SCOPE OF WORK

Funds from the Sustainable Development Challenge Grant were used help market the economic benefits of a voluntary green development program through three central goals: to *catalyze* community partnership; *demonstrate* economic benefits; and *educate* land developers on sustainable development.

Specific results from this project included:

- i Outreach to the 16 local governments
- i Building of positive personal relationships with developers
- i Implementation of a demonstration project with Manheim Auto Auction (Stafford, VA) to serve as a model for cost-effective reduced-impact development

- i Implementation of parking lot biofilters at three separate commercial sites as example projects
- i Composition of a Developer's Reduced Impact Manual entitled *Growing Greener in Your Rappahannock River Watershed*
- i Compilation of a "cookbook" to ensure project transferability to other watershed areas

Some positive spin-offs occurred from this project as well. After hearing about the project, the Commonwealth of Virginia asked *FOR* to share their findings to boards of supervisors and planning commissions throughout the watershed. In doing so, *FOR* greatly enhanced exposure for their guidebook and the Sustainable Development Challenge Grant project. *FOR* received additional funding from the Division of Conservation and Recreation to cover costs for local government outreach to educate such entities on incorporating innovative BMPs into site designs and thus ensuring quicker approval for developers who wish to use more sustainable designs.

If you would like to view/download a copy of the Friends of the Rappahannock's *Project Cookbook* or their *Growing Greener in Your Rappahannock River Watershed*, be sure to do so by visiting our [Sustainable Development Challenge Grants](#) page.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Financial support for this project came from both development and conservative interests. The project was also endorsed by developers wanting to benefit from such an innovative approach to sustainable development and related marketing opportunities.